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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 11 March 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Revitalization of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the Committee's obligations under paragraph 3 (a) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, and, in that context, to a non-paper proposed by the two facilitators of the Committee's informal consultations on the rationalization of its future agenda:

> **"Revitalization of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) Non-Paper**
>
> **Introduction**
>
> Following resolutions A/58/126 and A/58/316, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) has reviewed its practices and working methods during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.
>
> The members of the Fourth Committee agree on the continuing relevance and importance of the work of their Committee. They further agree on the necessity to retain and strengthen the political character of the work of the Fourth Committee. The specific proposals relating to changes in the working methods, agenda items and related resolutions should be seen in this light.
>
> **Working Methods**
>
> Members agree that greater use should be made of interactive debates, panel discussions and 'question time' with representatives of the Secretariat, United Nations experts and, in informal meetings, with other stakeholders. Specifically, the following changes in working methods have been proposed:
>
> With regard to the item 'Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects', this interactive debate should be divided up by chapters according to the reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. In this context, special attention should be given to the subject of peacebuilding in the context of addressing post-conflict situations.
>
> Concerning the item 'international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space' representatives of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should give an interactive presentation on its work at the beginning of the first meeting, followed by a question and answer period.
>
> The items 'Questions . relating to information' and 'United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East' (UNRWA) should also contain a question and answer period.
>
> **Agenda Items**
>
> In order to retain and strengthen the political character of the work of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, members agree that the General Assembly should consider allocating items of such nature to the Committee in order to allow for a more in-depth exchange of views and to benefit from the proposed interactive methods of work in the Fourth Committee, where appropriate.
>
> The following items, among others, should be considered in this context:
>
> - 'Prevention of armed conflict'
> - 'Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa'.
>
> Members agree that the General Assembly could consider allocating country-specific items of a predominantly political nature to the Fourth Committee after consultations with the co-sponsors of resolutions pertaining to these items.
>
> Members believe that the item 'Assistance in mine action' does not fit well within the agenda of the Committee. They request the General Assembly to consider relocating the item from the agenda of the Fourth Committee to another forum.
>
> Regarding the item 'Effects of atomic radiation', members agree that the General Assembly should consider relocating it to another forum. If the item stays on the agenda of the Fourth Committee, the resolution on this item should be bi-annualized, containing a provision

which would allow the Committee to continue to meet annually.

Members agree that the number of meetings on the item 'International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space' should be reduced from four to three.

Members note that considerable progress has been made over the last years in streamlining the resolutions on the item 'UNRWA' and note the importance of exploring the possibility for further streamlining. Concerning the item 'Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories', members agree in their hope for genuine progress in the Middle East which would facilitate streamlining of resolutions under this agenda item by their co-sponsors.

Regarding the item 'Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples' members agree that the Fourth Committee should request the Special Committee to continue to examine possibilities to streamline its work and to present concrete proposals for further consideration by the Fourth Committee."

2. **Mr. Carl** (Austria) said that the latest version of the non-paper incorporated two significant changes: a revised draft of the first paragraph under the heading "Agenda Items", proposed by the representative of Singapore, and the addition of the phrase "to continue to examine [possibilities ...]" in the final paragraph, proposed by the representative of Saint Lucia. On the basis of the informal consultations and the statement delivered three days earlier, it should be possible to achieve a consensus on the draft before the Committee.

3. **The Chairman** said that he had been informed that both the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the European Union agreed to the non-paper. He urged other delegations to support it, and hoped it could be adopted by consensus.

4. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, although his delegation had some problems with the text of the non-paper, it would join the consensus in a spirit of cooperation. He wished, however, to propose the following amended version of the first paragraph on the second page: "Members agree that the General Assembly could consider allocating country-specific items of an internationally predominantly political nature and pertinence to the Fourth Committee ...".

5. **Mr. Ternes** (Luxembourg) said that the European Union could accept the amendments proposed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

6. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria) said that his delegation supported the Iranian amendment, which clarified the content of the paragraph.

7. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, requested a suspension of the meeting in order to enable the Non-Aligned Movement to hold brief consultations.

8. **The Chairman** asked whether the countries in the Non-Aligned Movement wished to consult on the Iranian proposal or on another matter. As they had already voiced their general support for the non-paper, he was somewhat perplexed.

9. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) said that the Non-Aligned countries wished to hold consultations on both the Iranian proposal and an additional concern raised by one member.

10. **Ms. El Alaoui** (Morocco) confirmed that the representative of Egypt was speaking on behalf of the entire Non-Aligned Movement, and not only the country that had raised the additional matter. In any case, the group always honoured requests for consultations, even when they were made by only one delegation.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

11. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) expressed the full support of the Non-Aligned Movement for both the draft text as a whole and the Iranian amendment. The Non-Aligned Movement was grateful to the European Union for its flexibility and spirit of cooperation.

12. *The non-paper, as amended, was adopted.*

13. **The Chairman** said that he would submit the non-paper to the President of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 58/316. Recommendations contained in the non-paper, once adopted by the Assembly, would guide the future work of the Committee. He thanked the facilitators for their hard work, and the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.